

# SOME SCOTTISH EPISCOPALIANS IN THE NORTH AMERICAN COLONIES 1675-1750

BY THE VERY REV. PROVOST R. FOSKETT, PH.D.

WHEN Henry Compton was translated to the diocese of London in 1675, he inherited, in addition to the see of London, a somewhat loosely defined jurisdiction over the Church in the North American Colonies. There is some doubt as to the origin of this peculiar arrangement and it rested upon a very slender legal foundation. In the opinion of one of Compton's successors, Thomas Sherlock, who held the see from 1748-1761, it had arisen quite fortuitously, because at the time of the founding of Virginia the Bishop of London had been a great promoter of Plantations and had raised £1,000 towards the foundation of a College in that colony.<sup>1</sup> It was natural for the Virginia Company, of which he was a member, to apply to him for help in providing ministers for its churches. Much more probable is the view that the Bishop of London's jurisdiction dates from the time of William Laud, who was Bishop from 1628-1633, and whose policy it was to extend the Church of England Establishment to every part of the world under English rule.

Shortly after his appointment, Compton requested the Lords of Trade and Plantations to enquire into his authority over the Church in the Colonies. Reference was made to the Charters of Virginia and New England, during the period of Laud's tenure of the see of London but the search revealed little apart from the fact that the Merchant Adventurers desired the churches in foreign parts to be placed under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London in all things concerning their church government. Compton realised that this was a most unsatisfactory foundation for his authority and persuaded the Privy Council to include an order in their instructions to all colonial governors, informing them that no minister should be given any ecclesiastical benefice in the Colony, without a certificate from the Bishop of London of his being conformable to the doctrine of the Church of England. It is possible that Compton also obtained an Order in Council, placing the American Colonies under his ecclesiastical jurisdiction.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Thomas Sherlock*, Carpenter. S.P.C.K. 1936. p. 191.

<sup>2</sup> *Protestant Bishop*, Carpenter, Longmans, 1956, p. 254.

Having ensured that his authority was firmly grounded, the Bishop began to ascertain the state of affairs in the Colonial Church for which he had assumed responsibility. The result of the enquiry was a memorial of abuses, which he presented to the Lords of Trade and Plantations in 1677. In this document, the Bishop pointed out that parishes had been kept vacant when a qualified minister was available for presentation and that the profits from vacant benefices had been misused. He complained that some of the clergy were non-resident and held more than one cure of souls, that the provision made for their maintenance was both precarious and inadequate and that the Vestries claimed the sole management of church affairs and attempted to exercise an arbitrary control over their ministers. Compton continued his fact-finding enquiries and, from time to time, presented further memoranda to the Lords of Trade and Plantations. Three measures seemed to him essential for the efficient administration of the Church in North America. It was necessary to have the full co-operation of the Governor and, if he proved hostile to the Church, to secure his removal. It was equally necessary to add to the number of clergymen serving in the Colonies, to increase their stipends and improve their status. As a Bishop residing in England could not possibly superintend the work of the Church in North America, it was essential for him to have someone with authority to act in his behalf, ideally in each Colony.

In 1689, Compton appointed his first Commissary, a Scotsman named James Blair who continued in office until 1743. During these fifty-four years, many Scotsmen came to work in Virginia with the result that the Governor, Sir Edmund Andros, who had succeeded Sir Francis Nicholson in 1691, complained that Blair was filling the country with Scottish clergymen, but Compton brushed aside the complaint and said he accepted full responsibility for the clergymen whom he licensed for the Colony.

Blair first went out to Virginia in 1685 and was a man of experience and considerable ability. The son of a Minister of the Church of Scotland Blair was born in 1656, probably in Edinburgh. He was educated at Aberdeen and at Edinburgh University, where he graduated M.A. on 21st July, 1673. Six years later, he was presented to the parish of Cranston and received Holy Orders from Bishop John Wishart in the summer of 1679 before being admitted to his benefice.<sup>1</sup>

After two years, Blair was either deprived or ejected from his parish for refusing to take the Test oath imposed by the Scottish Parliament to enable King James VII to place Roman Catholics in positions of authority and influence. Moving to England, Blair found employment as a clerk

<sup>1</sup> *Virginia's Mother Church*, Brydon, V.H.S. 1947, p. 276.

in the office of the Master of Rolls and remained in that post until 1684. About this time, Bishop Compton offered him the parish of Varino or Henrico in Virginia and he went there in 1685.<sup>1</sup> It was a remote parish with a small population and consisted of plantations and smaller farms. Blair quickly settled down in his new surroundings and in 1687, married Sarah Harrison, a Daughter of Colonel Benjamin Harrison, a prominent figure in the political life of the Colony. Two years later, the Bishop of London made him his Commissary for Virginia and Colonel Nicholson, the Governor, who had been in England during 1689, brought back with him the document signifying his appointment. It read as follows:—

"Henry, by divine permission Bishop of London, to all the faithful in Christ, to whom the present writing may come—Greeting eternal in the Lord.

Know ye that we, the Bishop of London aforesaid, to whom every ecclesiastical jurisdiction and in every way, under Virginia situated in America by Royal Constitutions is generally recognised to pertain, except the power of granting licences for celebrating marriages, probating of wills of deceased persons and conferring benefices, have named made and constituted and by these presents do name, make and constitute James Blair, Clerk, our Commissary in and throughout all Virginia aforesaid, trusting very greatly his learning, probity and industry, with all and every power of carrying out and performing, previous exceptions excepted, whatever pertains and belongs or ought to pertain and belong to the office of Commissary aforesaid, by law or custom according to the laws, canons and constitutions followed and observed in the Church of England; with power moreover to set one or more clerk or clerks as substitute or substitutes, in his place.

In confidence and in testimony of all and singular of which premises we have caused our Episcopal seal to be placed upon these presents.

Given on the fifteenth day of the month of December in the year of our Lord, 1689, and in the twenty-fourth year of our translation.

H. LONDON"<sup>2</sup>

Within a few months of receiving his commission, Blair summoned the clergy to a Convention at James Town on July 23rd, 1690. No register of attendance was called and no minutes kept but the general business of the Convention is known. An address from the Bishop of London was read and two resolutions passed, the first to appeal for assistance in establishing a College in Virginia and the second, to approve a plan for

<sup>1</sup> *Protestant Bishop*, p. 263.

<sup>2</sup> Brydon, *op.cit.*, p. 280.

Church Reform in the Colony, by setting up an ecclesiastical jurisdiction and a series of ecclesiastical courts, for the trial of clerical and lay offenders against the Moral Law.

Immediately after the Convention, Blair as Commissary, issued a proclamation, and Colonel Nicholson sent a circular letter to the Justices of the Peace and to other Civil Authorities, but the proposed method of improving morals was not well received and the House of Burgesses refused to enforce the judgements of the ecclesiastical courts.

The proposal to establish a College in the Colony was more favourably received and Blair was able to count on the support of the Governor and the Assembly for this project. An appeal for funds was made throughout the Colony and when an adequate sum had been collected or promised, an emissary was sent to England with a view to obtaining a Royal Charter for the College and a grant of money. Blair was the obvious person to undertake this mission and he did so most successfully. On his return to America, he brought with him the Royal Charter, dated 8th February, 1692, and the promise of a continuing income from public funds. He was also successful in securing the use of money bequeathed by Robert Boyle for the Christianisation of the native American Indians, to build and equip Brafferton Hall as an Indian School.<sup>1</sup>

During his visit to England, Blair had been given plans for the main buildings of the new College by Sir Christopher Wren, and he had found a suitable master for the Grammar School in the person of Mungo Inglis, a Scottish Episcopalian Clergyman. In 1695, the corner stone of the College was laid but Blair had to contend with many difficulties before the work was completed. During his absence in England, Colonel Nicholson had been replaced as Governor by Sir Edmund Andros and Blair found him to be much less co-operative than his predecessor. The Commissary soon clashed with him and even accused him of being hostile to the College and hindering its building. A further cause of disagreement was the provision of grants from quit rents and taxes to erect the College and to maintain it. The controversy became so acute that the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London held an enquiry in December 1697, which both Blair and the Governor attended. A few months after the close of the enquiry, Sir Edmund Andros was removed from office and Colonel Nicholson returned for a second term as Governor of Virginia.

It appears that Blair was inclined to be impatient and to have a quick temper and that Colonel Nicholson, as he advanced in years, became imperious and easily irritated. Both of them were zealous for the welfare

<sup>1</sup> *Protestant Bishop*, pp. 264-5.

of the Church in the Colony but they clashed, from time to time, on matters of policy. Nicholson wanted to use part of the College for administrative purposes as a temporary measure, when the statehouse was burnt down in 1698. This caused inconvenience to the College and Blair was soon at loggerheads with the Governor. Another enquiry became necessary but on this occasion, the Bishop of London sent Colonel Robert Quarry to carry out an investigation on the spot, and as a result, he recommended the removal of Blair and his appointment to some substantial preferment in England. He thought that the Commissary was to blame because he was prejudiced against the Governor and that this was the cause of his hostility towards him. Whatever the merits of the case may have been, Compton did not act upon Quarry's advice; on the contrary he left Blair at his post and Nicholson was removed from Virginia in 1704.

The foundation of William and Mary College by Royal Charter brought additional responsibility to the Commissary. Blair became the President and, for the first year after its opening, he also held the post of Rector. It was impossible for him to carry out his new duties and retain his parish of Henrico. In 1694, he moved to James Town and was in charge of the City Parish from 1694 until 1710, when he became Minister of Bruton parish at Williams Town.

During these years, the College expanded its work. The Grammar School was the first department of the institution to be opened, followed in 1700 by the completion of the main buildings, and a little later by the School for Indians. It was somewhat disappointing to discover in the course of time that the School failed to fulfil its original purpose, in that no Indian boy who became a pupil in it ever came forward to take Holy Orders.<sup>1</sup>

In 1705, there was a serious fire which gutted the College and it had to be re-built. Then there were dissensions among the staff, and the Master of the Grammar School resigned after a difference of opinion with the President. Blair, however, refused to despair and in the end his tenacity of purpose was rewarded, for in 1718, the General Assembly made a grant of £1,000 for the education of children indigenous to the Colony. In the same year, Blair tried to establish a Chair of Divinity and appealed to John Robinson, the new Bishop of London who had succeeded Compton in 1714, for financial assistance. He needed £400 per annum, of which £200 was for the Professor's salary and £200 for the payment of the education of ten divinity students.

<sup>1</sup> Brydon, *op.cit.*, p. 299.

The foundation and maintenance of William and Mary College was Blair's greatest achievement but it occupied only part of his energies. The position of Commissary was an important one, even if its powers were in some respects limited. Blair could not, for example, interfere in a dispute between a minister and his vestry, nor could he take any action where property rights were involved, nor hold an enquiry into the moral conduct of any layman. The only penalty he could inflict upon an offending clergyman was to suspend his licence to officiate in the Colony and even then, the suspension could not be effective unless the Vestry wished to be rid of its Minister. The fact that in 34 years Blair suspended only two clergymen suggests that it was extremely difficult to discipline the clergy or that there was little need to do so.

In his attempt to improve the conditions under which the clergy worked in Virginia, Blair met with a small measure of success. It was customary to pay the Ministers stipends in corn or tobacco or in bills of exchange, but as the price of tobacco fluctuated considerably, they did not invariably receive the minimum stipend of £80 which was due to them. When the subject of the remuneration of the clergy was discussed by the Council, Blair expressed his views so strongly that in 1695 he was suspended from its meetings because "of several undecent reflections reiterated and asserted with passion, to His Excellency their Majesty's Governor."<sup>1</sup> The House of Burgesses denied that there was any ground for the complaints voiced by Blair and contended that the majority of the ministers "were in as good a condition in point of livelihood as a gentleman that was well seated and had 14 servants."<sup>2</sup> At a Convention of the clergy which met in James Town in 1696, the clergy rebutted the views expressed by the Burgesses and stated the reason for their dissatisfaction with the existing state of affairs. The income from the sale of tobacco was often less than was commonly assumed, the considerable perquisites amounted to an average of £3 per annum, the Glebe varied greatly, in some parishes there was none, and in most cases it did not produce an income of more than 40s. to 50s. per annum. The clergy also complained about their insecurity of tenure, for when the Governor failed to induct them, they were appointed on a yearly basis and could be dismissed by the Vestry, without any canonical grounds for their action.

The controversy dragged on for some months and ended with a small increase in clerical salaries. It is probable that both sides in the dispute were guilty of exaggeration. According to the 1762 survey, £80 per annum was a high stipend in Scotland and in Virginia, it provided a sufficient income for an educated man to live and rear a family, if measured by

<sup>1</sup> Brydon, *op.cit.*, p. 314.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 315.

planters' incomes at the time. On the other hand ,the price of tobacco varied considerably and the stipend was paid in weight, not in cash value.

In theory, a parish minister, when he was licenced by the Bishop of London to his benefice, ought to have been inducted by the Governor, after presentation by the Vestry. This did not always take place owing to the reluctance of the Vestries to present their minister for induction and, in the case of Francis Nicholson, owing to the Governor's refusal to act, without a motion from the Vestry, Blair consulted the Attorney-General in England as to the exact legal position and discovered that if a vestry failed to present a clergyman for induction to a vacant parish, after a period of six months, it lapsed, and the Governor, as Ordinary, was required to present and induct a minister.

The Church in Virginia was greatly strengthened by the long and devoted service of Commissary Blair. There was a regular oversight of the clergy, annual conventions were held to enable them to discuss the affairs of the Church in the Colony as a whole, suitable clergymen were found for vacant parishes and the Bishop of London was provided with detailed reports of the conditions which prevailed in this remote part of his jurisdiction. Blair's faithful discharge of his duties was recognised when he was made a member of the Council of State for the Colony, a precedent which was followed in the case of other Commissaries. As the plan to establish a Suffragan Bishoprick in Virginia came to nothing, in spite of repeated requests to the Government to agree to such an office, the Bishop of London did the best he could to provide for the welfare of the Church in the Colony by appointing a Commissary and the successful working of the experiment in Virginia led him to make a similar appointment for Maryland in 1695.

Before Compton's appointment to the see of London, it had proved difficult to find suitable clergymen to serve in the Colonies and in 1679, Virginia, with over 40 parishes, had only 20 clergymen; and Maryland, with 20 parishes had only 13. In Virginia, the practice of appointing ministers to parishes on a yearly contract instead of inducting them and giving them security of tenure, contributed to this acute shortage. Even in 1724, only 5 out of 28 ministers had been inducted and the remainder were employed on a yearly basis. The majority of them came from Britain and were in Holy Orders before they were accepted by the Bishop of London for the Colonies or were ordained by him, before they received his licence. American born-ministers were in a minority and this is not surprising when it is remembered that they had to go to England for ordination. Out of every five candidates who made the voyage, only four returned. The normal cost of this long and dangerous journey was £100

and the hazards included shipwreck and capture by a hostile power as well as death from smallpox. George Ross, a graduate of Edinburgh was captured by the French when he was returning to England in 1711 and he was imprisoned in France. Writing from Dinant on 26th March, 1711 he says: "I as well as others was stript of all my clothes from the crown of my head to the sole of my feet: in a word I was left as naked as I was born and by means of the greedy priest that was chaplain to the ship. He perceived that my clothes were better than his own and therefore he never ceased to importune the Captain until he got leave to change forsooth with me; so that I am now clothed in rags in testimony of my bondage."

Many of the parishes in Virginia were filled by Scottish Episcopalians, some on the recommendation of the Bishop of London or his Commissary, others after their appointment as missionaries by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Most of them remained at their posts until they died, although one Scot, James Warden, minister of James City Parish, was dismissed in disgrace in 1712, after one year's service in the Colony. These men came from very different backgrounds—John Brunskill, who was licenced about 1720, being a Royalist and James Pendin, who had been recommended by Blair in 1732, being a former Presbyterian and a student of divinity at Glasgow. George Robinson had been chaplain to a Man of War until he was appointed to Bristol parish where he ministered for 46 years. Some of the clergy came from Upper class families, such as John Carnegie, a graduate of Glasgow, who was minister of St. Stephen's parish from 1702 until his death in 1708-9, and Thomas Barclay, who was ordained late in life and was Garrison Chaplain at Albany for two years before his appointment as S.P.G. missionary in 1709. When there was no missionary working among the Iroquois, Barclay maintained contact with them and later introduced William Andrews to them, when he arrived to take over the Indian Mission. He remained minister of Albany until his death in 1728 and was responsible for building St. Peter's Church.

William Willie was a Highlander, and served in Virginia. He came to the Colony as a young man and later felt the desire to be ordained. When he approached Blair, he was told there were no vacant parishes and therefore ,he could not be recommended to the Bishop of London, although his character and educational qualifications were satisfactory. Willie was persistent and at his own expense set sail for England with a view to obtaining Holy Orders. His request for ordination was granted but the Bishop of London was unable to give him a licence as he did not possess the necessary certificate from the Commissary. For the same reason he failed to receive the King's Bounty, a grant of £20 made to all

clergymen and schoolmasters going to the Colonies, which was first introduced in the reign of King Charles II to encourage recruitment.

By the time Willie returned to Virginia, the parish of Albemarle had become vacant and he received the appointment. Having secured a letter from the Vestry to the Bishop of London, Willie, with the Commissary's approval, applied for the King's Bounty but it is not known if he ever received it. He remained minister of Albemarle parish from 1740 until his death in 1776. For a few months in 1771, when the Commissary, James Horrocks was in England, Willie acted on his behalf.

Mention has been made of Thomas Bray's appointment as Commissary for Maryland. Conditions in the Colony were not dissimilar from those prevailing in Virginia when Blair first went out there. Many parishes were without ministers, the quality of the clergy was poor and their conditions of service unsatisfactory. A brief visit to Maryland in 1700 convinced Bray that a systematic effort was required to promote Christian Education and Christian Missions in North America. With this in mind, he returned to London and proceeded to found the S.P.G. to supplement the work of S.P.C.K., the Society he had already founded before going out to Maryland.

At an early meeting of the Committee of S.P.G., which received its Charter in 1701, the qualifications of those who were to be accepted as missionaries of the Society were discussed. Enquiries were to be made as to the candidate's age, condition, temper, prudence, learning, sober and pious conversation, zeal for the Christian religion, diligence in his Holy Calling, affection for the present Government and conformity to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England. Particular care was requested from those who supplied testimonials. Minutes of the meeting held in London 21st April, 1702 read as follows:—

"and the Society do request and earnestly beseech all persons concerned, that they recommend no man out of favour or any other worldly consideration but with sincere regard for the honour of Almighty God and our Blessed Saviour, as they tender the interest of the Christian religion and the good of men's souls."

At a later meeting, it was agreed to encourage men to work in the Plantations by advancing them half a year's salary, provided that an undertaking was made that they would take the first opportunity of a passage. Should they die at the end of their first year of service, the remaining half would be paid to their heirs and executors.

The first missionary to be appointed by S.P.G. was a well-known Scottish controversialist, George Keith. He was a former Presbyterian

and for many years, a leading figure among the Quakers in England, Scotland and North America. Keith was born at Peterhead about 1638 and brought up as a Presbyterian. His family were upholders of the Solemn League and Covenant.

Entering Aberdeen University in 1654, Keith came under the influence of Gilbert Burnet, who 18 years later was to become a distinguished Bishop of Salisbury.<sup>1</sup> As a result of Burnet's conversation, and from reading the works of Cambridge Platonists such as John Smith, he deserted Presbyterianism but was not prepared to go as far as Burnet and become an Episcopalian. Instead, he joined the Quaker meeting in Aberdeen. Graduating in 1658, Keith moved to Edinburgh in 1667 and soon ran into trouble with the authorities for his refusal to conform. For this he was imprisoned for three years and on being released, went down to London and associated with the Quakers in that city. From 1670 until 1677 his headquarters were again in Aberdeen but during that time, he made a number of journeys South of the Border and engaged in public controversy on behalf of the Quakers. For some months in 1676 and 1677, Keith was imprisoned in Aberdeen. He left the country again as soon as he was released and travelled on the Continent. In 1684, he went out to America for the first time, having been appointed surveyor-general of New Jersey and settled at Perth Amboy, where there was a large Quaker colony. First-hand experience of Quakerism in the Colonies caused Keith some anxiety and he entertained a fervent desire to reform it and to emphasise the importance of Christian dogma. His activities as a reformer of Quakerism led to fierce and sometimes bitter controversy and in the end, Keith's followers separated from the main body of Quakers and formed themselves into the sect of "Christian" Quakers. When Keith returned to London in 1693, he left behind in the Colonies several hundred followers. Some of them became reconciled with their brethren, others joined the Baptists but most of them maintained their own meetings, until their leader became a convert to Anglicanism. In the next five years, Keith engaged in controversy with the Quakers, in pamphlets and in public debates. For the campaign to expose their errors, he gained the support of separatists such as Francis Bugg, the author of "Pilgrims Progress from Quakerism to Christianity" and, which was far more important, of Anglican clergymen, but instead of reforming the Quakers as he had hoped, he was himself rejected by them.<sup>2</sup>

For a number of years, Keith had been moving in the direction of Anglicanism and at the age of 62 years, he became a member of the Church of England, receiving his first communion in St. George's Church, St.

<sup>1</sup> *George Keith*, Kirby, New York, 1942, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Kirby, *op.cit.*, p. 109.

Botolph Lane, on the first Sunday in February, 1700. Three months later, he was made deacon by the Bishop of London and in March 1702, he was priested by Lloyd, the Bishop of Worcester, in Whitehall Chapel. When news of his reception into the Church of England reached his followers, many in London and even more in Huntingdon, Bedford, Reading and Colchester, followed his example.

After his return to England, Keith had been in correspondence with his followers in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. He now advised S.P.G. to send out a missionary to Philadelphia as he had received news that many of his followers had joined the Church of England, and at his suggestion Robert Keith was sent out to America in 1701. The Committee of the Society took the further step of appointing George Keith as a travelling agent with the special task of reclaiming the Quakers in the Colonies. Accompanied by another Scot, Patrick Gordon, Keith sailed from Cowes on 28th April, 1702. The passengers on the ship included a former pupil of Keith's, Colonel Morris, now Governor of Massachusetts, and its Chaplain was John Talbot, a Non-Juror, with whom he became friends, during the voyage. Talbot had already seen service in Virginia and Keith recommended the Society to appoint him as his assistant, a recommendation which the Society wisely approved. Later Talbot became Rector of St. Mary's Burlington and remained there until his death in 1727. It is interesting to note that he was consecrated by Non-Juring Bishops in 1722 but apart from a few confirmations, did not exercise his episcopal powers irregularly.<sup>1</sup>

During the summer of 1702, Keith made his headquarters at Boston and preached against the errors of Quakerism. His custom was to visit Quaker meetings and to engage those present in controversy. His work was not however, confined to the reclamation of Quakers and he was anxious to strengthen the life of the Church in the Colonies as a whole. To this end, a meeting of Anglican clergymen was held in New York on 9th November, 1702 and after a full discussion, a Report of its recommendations was forwarded to S.P.G. One of the greatest obstacles to the growth of the Church, it was pointed out, was the subversive activity of the Quakers, who attacked it in their literature and spread their teaching with the assistance of missionaries sent out from England. The need for prayer books, homilies and pamphlets was stressed and the desire for a Suffragan Bishop to confirm those who had been baptised, to ordain the clergy and to supervise their work, for too often they were like sheep without a shepherd.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Two Hundred Years of S.P.G.*, C. F. Pascoe, London, 1901, p. 745.

<sup>2</sup> Kirby, *op. cit.* p. 136.

With a feeling that the tour had been worth while, Keith returned to the work among the Quakers and made a special effort to win over his former followers to the Church of England. Every Sunday, Keith preached against the Quakers and frequently on week-days as well. He distributed large numbers of tracts, talked with hundreds of isolated or estranged persons and won them over to the Church, baptised the children when asked to do so, listened to the requests for clergy made by the laity and to requests for a Bishop, made by the clergy and included them in his reports to S.P.G. in London. Looking back on all this activity, Keith felt he had done more for the Church in one year than he could have done in England in seven. The Society for its part, had done what it could to provide the clergy needed in the Colonies and 13 missionaries were sent to the Colonies between 1702 and 1704.

Everyone seems to have regarded Keith's missionary tour as a great success. Talbot spoke of it with enthusiasm, the Minister and Vestry of Christ Church, Philadelphia wrote to thank S.P.G. for sending him to the Colony and the Governor of New York informed the Bishop of London that in justice to him, he omitted no opportunity and spared no pains where he could advance the interest of the Church of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

In appreciation of Keith's labours, the Society made him a member and he was frequently consulted about its work in North America until his death in 1716.

Among the missionaries sent to the Colonies by the Society between 1702 and 1750, were a number of Scottish Episcopalians. Thomas Crawford, who was Minister of Dover in 1709, appears to have been a diligent missionary. After two years in Delaware, he reported to S.P.G. "at my first coming, I found the people all stuffed up with various opinions but not one in the place was so much of a churchman as to stand godfather for a child, so that I was two months in the place before I baptised any, on that account . . . but now, I thank God, I have baptised a great number. They bring their children with sureties (sponsors), very orderly to the church and also people at age, a great many, the greater part whereof were Quakers and Quaker children, for by God's blessing upon my labours, I have not only gained the hearts of my hearers but some that were my greatest enemies at first and Quakers that were fully resolved against me, are come over and have joined themselves to our communion. I have baptised families together, so I have daily, additions to the congregation."

In another report to S.P.G. Crawford asked for various church furnishings to be sent out to him, including a pulpit cloth and a surplice.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kirby, *op.cit.*, p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> S.P.G. Minutes vol. I., 14.3.1709.

On 30th May, 1709, Andrew Boyd and Robert Macnoe offered themselves to the Society for work in the Plantations. Both of them produced their several diplomas under the seal of Glasgow University, but as neither of them were ordained, the Board deferred their decision being apprehensive of the inconvenience to the Society which might ensue from sending over young persons who had never served a cure. In June of the same year, Robert Sinclair was accepted as a missionary.<sup>1</sup> He had produced the necessary certificates and evidence of his ordination by the Bishop of London, was 24 years of age and had been Tutor to Lord Crichton. Sinclair was sent out to New Castle but only stayed there for two years, resigning from the parish in 1711.

Before Sinclair's appointment to New Castle, the minister had been another Scotsman, George Ross. Born in Ross-shire and a graduate of Edinburgh, Ross was sent to the parish in 1705 but in 1708, removed to Chester. When seen in 1709 by Gordon, the missionary who had accompanied George Keith to the Colonies in 1702, he told him of his intention to leave unless the Society restored his allowance. The Vestry at New Castle had complained to the Society about the Minister's conduct, and his case was considered at a number of meetings in 1709. It appears that the complaint came from the Vestry which had been constituted after his departure, for Ross himself had never had a Vestry and "acted in all things according to his pleasure."<sup>2</sup> The Gentlemen of New Castle also wrote letters to the Board giving an account of Ross's conduct and stating that they had subscribed £50 annually with the promise of further encouragement. Although they had had no desire to lose him, he had suddenly removed to Chester. In October, 1711, they again wrote to the Board saying that Ross was returning to England, owing to ill health. They now spoke well of him and asked the Society to view him with favour. About the same date, the gentlemen of Chester applied for a new minister and gave a good account of Ross while he had been at Chester. Colonel Robert Hunter, the Governor of Virginia, was in favour of his reinstatement at New Castle. After a full discussion at its meeting on 13th November, 1711, the Board agreed to restore George Ross to the roll of missionaries and to regard him as being of good character, piety and learning. Before deciding what to do with him, the advice of the President (the Archbishop of Canterbury) was sought. In the meantime, Ross had petitioned the Society for the payment of the arrears due to him but before making payment, the Bishop of London was consulted. A few days later, the Board received a letter saying the Bishop was satisfied

<sup>1</sup> S.P.G. *Minutes*, vol. I, 13.6.1709.

<sup>2</sup> S.P.G. *op.cit.*, 26.12.1709.

as to Ross's innocence and that he recommended the Society to pay the arrears for which he had petitioned and to appoint him to Chester parish.<sup>1</sup>

One of the most interesting of the Scottish Episcopalians to be employed by the S.P.G. was William Andrews. He first went out to Virginia in 1700 and was known to Colonel Francis Nicholson who gave him a good character. In March 1712, he offered his services to the Society and after preaching a trial sermon in the church of St. Michael Royal, was accepted for work among the Iroquois. This Indian Mission had been started in 1704 by the Rev. Thoroughgood Moore but after a year of frustrating delays, he asked to be transferred to another post and was sent to New Jersey in 1706. Nothing further was done until 1709, when Thomas Barclay, the Garrison Chaplain at Albany, agreed to take over the additional responsibility of the Indian Mission.

The Society was stirred to renewed effort as a result of the visit of the Indian Kings to England in 1710. When they were received in audience by Queen Anne, they requested her to send missionaries to their country and Archbishop Tenison referred the matter to the S.P.G. Two years later, a fort and chapel were erected at a cost of £1,000 and the Queen shewed her personal interest in the Mission by providing the chapel with a salver, bason, chalice, paten, two flagons, all bearing the Royal cipher and Coat of Arms. She also gave the furniture for the chapel—a communion table, complete with carpet, table cloth and two damask napkins, a pulpit cloth and cushion with tassels for the pulpit, a small cushion for the desk, a Holland surplice, a large Bible, two Prayer Books, a Book of Homilies and a painting on canvas of the Royal Coat of Arms. Archbishop Tenison presented tables painted with the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, and the Society, a table of their Seal, finely painted in proper colours, and five dozen sermons, for use in the Province.<sup>2</sup>

Andrews arrived at Albany on 13th November, 1712, and was met by Hendrick, Emperor of the Six Nations, accompanied by the Five principal chiefs. Two days later, he addressed a public meeting and explained why he had come to live in their country. He then moved from Albany to Mohawk Castle, some 40 miles to the north-west, accompanied by Thomas Barclay, another missionary and an interpreter. For some months, the Mission made good progress; the children responded to their teaching, some adults, who understood English, attended the chapel services and received instruction in the Christian religion. In 1713, Andrews went to

<sup>1</sup> *S.P.G. op.cit.*, 27.11.1711.

<sup>2</sup> *Queen Anne's American Kings*, R. P. Bond, Oxford, 1952, pp. 59-60.

Oneidas Castle and baptised 19 children before returning to his headquarters. Unfortunately some of the children died and the missionary was accused of poisoning them. He continued to work with diligence, sense and generosity and his long letters to the Society shew that he possessed a sound heart and a clear eye. At the end of six years, however, Andrews felt the need for a change and asked to be transferred to some other post. His request was granted, but with reluctance, and only after Governor Hunter had made a personal enquiry into the state of the Indian Mission. Andrews appears to have been highly regarded by the Board, for he received a salary of £150 per annum.

Another pioneer missionary who came from Scotland was James Honeyman. He was sent to Newport in 1704, after two years experience at Jamaica, Long Island. During his long ministry which extended over 45 years, he not only built up the life of the Church on Rhode Island but also gathered several congregations on the mainland, ministering to them until they were provided with a clergyman of their own. His work was not confined to white settlers and he informed the Society, in one of his reports, that 100 negroes were regular members of his congregation.<sup>1</sup>

At least thirty Scotsmen were licensed for Virginia between 1698 and 1710 but unfortunately in most cases, only their names are known to us. George MacQueen, who was accepted by S.P.G. in 1703 had been forced to flee from Scotland because of the Presbyterian persecution. Eneas Mackenzie was born in 1675, educated at Aberdeen and Edinburgh, ordained by the Bishop of London and ministered in the Colonies from 1705-1722. William Skinner, a member of the Macgregor clan went to America as an S.P.G. missionary in 1722 and remained there until 1758. James MacSparran, a graduate of Glasgow and an honorary D.D. of Oxford, was ordained in 1720 and ministered at Narragansett from 1721-1757.<sup>2</sup> Another graduate of Glasgow, William Lindsay, went out to the Colonies as a layman but later returned to England for ordination and after serving as an itinerant missionary, became the minister of Bristol parish in 1735 and continued there for ten years. William Black of Dumfries spent 38 years in Virginia as minister of Accomack parish, Robert Cuming, an M.A. of Glasgow University went to be S.P.G. missionary at St. Johns in 1749 and William Finney, who was a graduate of Glasgow, was minister of Henrico parish from 1711 until his death in 1727. There is something rather impressive about the record of long service given by so many Scottish clergymen to the Episcopal Church in the Colonies.

<sup>1</sup> *MacSparran Diary*, ed. Goodwin, Boston, 1899, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 22-23.

The missionaries felt very much in need of a Bishop who could be in their midst and both John Talbot and George Keith drew the Board's attention to its importance, if the Church was to make any further progress. The Society had asked for an appointment to be made, a house had been obtained at Burlington for episcopal use,<sup>1</sup> a Bishop of Virginia had been nominated (George Robinson, a naval chaplain) and letters patent issued, but all to no purpose. The Government was unco-operative and legal difficulties prevented the Archbishop from consecrating a Diocesan or even a Suffragan Bishop, for the Colonies.<sup>2</sup>

In the end, a solution was found, with the aid of the Non-Juring Scottish Bishops, who by the consecration of Samuel Seabury in Bishop Skinner's house in Aberdeen, in 1784, provided the American Church with its first Bishop.

The Scottish Episcopal Church is usually remembered with affection by members of the American Episcopal Church because of this memorable consecration but they ought to be equally grateful to Scotland for sending out so many pioneer missionaries to the Colonies between 1675 and 1750, who working under very difficult conditions, stuck to their posts for the best part of their lives, patiently building up the Anglican Church in North America, following the example of Commissary Blair who first went out to Virginia in 1685 and remained there until his death in 1743.

<sup>1</sup> Pascoe *op.cit.*, pp. 744-5.

<sup>2</sup> S.P.G. *op.cit.* 27.2.1710.